In the Specification:

Please amend the specification as follows:

On page 5, the fourth full paragraph has been amended as follows:

Fig. 4A is a view similar to Fig. 3 showing the HVAC duct and pillar assemblage subsequent to heating~~, and~~ according to a first embodiment of the invention;

On page 5, after the fourth full paragraph, insert the following new paragraph:

Fig. 4B is a view similar to Fig. 4A showing the HVAC duct and pillar assemblage subsequent to sealing according to a second embodiment of the invention, and

On page 5, the sixth full paragraph has been amended as follows:

Referring now to Fig. 1 there is shown a frame 10 of a vehicle, such as a van, ~~suv~~ SUV or station wagon, wherein the frame 10 surrounds a passenger compartment 11 and is constructed and arranged to support exterior structure of the vehicle. As is evident in Fig. 1, the frame 10 includes several frame elements; such as a rear-most pillar 12 that has an inner wall portion 13 and an outer wall portion 14 (shown displaced from the inner wall portion prior to assembly with the inner wall portion). The rear-most pillar 12 has a left pillar portion 15 and a rear roof header 16, which when assembled with the outer wall portion 14 provides an axially extending space 17 for enclosing an HVAC duct 18 shown in Fig. 1 displaced from the inner wall portion 13.

On page 7, the second full paragraph has been deleted as follows:

~~In accordance with an alternative embodiment of the invention, a two-part polyurethane foam such as BETAFOAM® is injected into the space 17 where it cures in place between the duct 18 and the inner surfaces of walls 13 and 14, adhering to both the duct and inner surfaces.~~

The paragraph bridging pages 8 and 9 has been amended as follows:

According to a first embodiment of the invention, the ~~The~~ structural foam 46 covering the HVAC duct 18 has deposits 52 of heat expandable epoxy at locations thereon that adhere with inner surfaces of the wall portions 13 and 14 upon heating the rear most pillar 12. While the heat expandable epoxy 52 is shown as spaced patches on the surface of the structural foam member 46, the epoxy can also be coated over substantial portions or the entire outer surface of the structural foam 46. Alternatively, the heat expandable epoxy 52 is coated on the inner surfaces of inner and outer walls 13 and 14 of the pillar 12 and expands toward the structural foam 46. The starting material for most epoxies, including heat expandable epoxies, is epichlorohydrin. Suitable epoxy resins include those that have at least two oxirane groups such as epoxy novalak resins obtained by reacting epichlorohydrin with phenol/formaldehyde condensates or cresol/formaldehyde condensates. Another preferred epoxy resin is polyglycidyl ether polymers obtained by reaction of epichlorohydrin with a polyhydroxy monomer such as 1,4 butanediol. A specific example of suitable epoxy novolak resin is Epon 164 available from Shell Chemical Company. A specific example of the polyglycidyl ether is available from Ciba-Geigy Corporation under the trade name ARALDITE® GT 7013. The epoxy resins are preferably employed with a cross linker which activates upon exposure to heat. Preferred cross linkers include polyamines with at least two primary or secondary

amine groups. Examples of such adhesives are Epi-cure P101 and Ancamine 2014FG available from Shell Chemical Company and Air Products Company, respectively. Accelerators such as triglycidylisocyanurate can be used with the cross linker to accelerate the reaction. Another example is a one part expandable adhesive, BETAMATE®, available from Dow Automotive of Auburn Hills, Mich.

On page 9, the first full paragraph has been amended as follows:

~~As is seen in~~ Fig. 4 directed to a first embodiment of the invention, once the epoxy ~~54~~ 52 expands, it assumes the structure 54, fills the gap 17 and engages the inner surfaces of the walls 13 and 14, the structural foam 46 adheres to the inner surfaces of walls 13 and 14. This stabilizes the framing element formed by the walls 13 and 14 of the pillar 12 by promoting membrane stress as opposed to sheet stress in the metal of the pillar. Improving load carrying capacity while buckling resistance and stiffness is increased enhances the efficiency of the pillar 12.

On page 9, after the first full paragraph, insert the following new paragraph:

As is seen in Fig. 4B where a second embodiment of the invention is shown, the structural foam is an expandable foam 46' which in accordance with an alternative embodiment of the invention, a two-part polyurethane foam such as BETAFOAM® is injected into the space 17 where it cures in place between the duct 18 and the inner surfaces of walls 13 and 14, adhering to both the duct and inner surfaces. Exemplary of such a foam 46' is a two-part polyurethane foam such as BETAFOAM®.